

# Finance Committee Minutes

## December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:07PM with Mr. David Herrick, Mr. Burt Imberman, Mr. Ira Yohalem, Mr. Bill Hattendorf, Mr. Edgar Zukauskas, and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Guests present were Mr. Nat Yohalem, Ms. Tara White, Mr. Michael Skorput, Mrs. Claudette Callahan, Mrs. Irene Dvorchick, Mrs. Francine Groaner Library Trustees and with Mr. Joe Krejci, Ms. Maureen Guidi, Mr. Neil Crawford from the New Marlborough Rescue Organization.

The minutes of December 8<sup>th</sup> 2011 were accepted as read, Mr. Herrick 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Yohalem 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

The Library Expense budget [50610.01] (\$33,995) now requesting {\$35,472} was circulated, and examined with the increases explained. In order to retain our state certification an increase in the purchasing of books is required. Other expenses have increased as a result of the increase of the cost of living, i.e. postage, maintenance services, oil, gas and electricity. The MARES program was explained by Ms. Dvorchick.

Library Salaries [50610.02] (\$47953.99) now requesting {\$52,645.60}. This represents a sizeable raise. Mrs. Callahan explained the rationale for this raise. Mrs. Debbie O'Brien has worked at the head librarian for 20 years. She has developed an excellent program and because of her credentials has been able to apply to other towns for a similar position with better pay. Mrs. Callahan stated that Mrs. O'Brien's salary is not equitable to the salaries of librarians performing similar tasks in other small towns, and it is for this reason that the trustees are requesting a onetime raise of 8%. Mr. Yohalem questioned whether the library had been involved in any outside fund raising activities. The Library does hold a bake sale, a pie sale, and sells second hand books at Burritt Day. These activities are run by the Friends of the Library and yield about \$1700. The Friends of the Library also administer a fund made up of private contributions, and contribute about \$10,000 per year towards the support of the Library. However, the monies from this fund can only be taken from the dividends, or interest, and lately the interest has been meager! Mr. Yohalem suggested that letters be sent soliciting funds from the community. The trustees are not allowed by law to do this, but the Friends of the Library could take on this challenge. The Trustees stated that the Friends of the Library were few. Mr. Imberman questioned the trust fund that only allowed the interest to be used! Mrs. Dvorchick stated that someone from the Berkshire Bank came to discuss this with the trustees twice a year. Mr. Imberman stated that he would be interested in attending the next meeting. Mr. Yohalem stated that if the trustees gave him the names of the Friends he would be glad to help them compose a letter soliciting funds from the community for the library. The Trustees agreed to do this.

Mr. Zukauskas expressed the committee views by stating that the Library is well run and a great asset to the community and Mrs. O'Brien's work is excellent. The committee would like to recommend the 8% raise, however this type of raise would set a precedent and other employees of the town would feel that they too should have such a raise. There was some discussion as to whether the raise could be given as a onetime "Bonus". Mrs. Callahan did have research to support the statement that Mrs. O'Brien's salary was not in line with other similar library positions. Mr. Zukauskas requested that Mrs. Callahan make this research available to the committee. On further questioning it was noted that the Library aide's salary was increased by \$.31 an hour and there was no increase in the maintenance salary.

The Library Trustees Expenses [50610.03] (\$320) was level funded.

The Library Trustees left and the committee began to examine the New Marlborough Rescue Expenses [60291.77], the New Marlborough Salary Account [60291.78] and the Ambulance Expenses Account [60231.00]. The New Marlborough Rescue Squad proposes to pay all of these accounts out of the COMSTAR account. The COMSTAR account receives funds by charging the various medical insurance companies when they transport patients. When the committee questioned Mr. Krejci, he stated that there is enough income to cover these expenses. This would leave only the cost of the ambulance to be met by the town. Mr. Herrick stated that if these three accounts were paid solely by COMSTAR funds it would be wise to place a minimal amount of money such as \$1.00 in each account so that should an emergency arise the accounts would be in existence and money could be transferred from the reserve fund into one of these accounts. There was some discussion about this, and in the end it was decided that Mr. Zukauskas would look into the legal ramification of allowing the accounts to be terminated.

The committee then began to consider the requests for transferring funds from the Reserve Fund. The New Marlborough Rescue Squad Salary [602291.78] was requesting the transfer of \$3505 to pay their clerical staff for the end of the year; they had originally under estimated the cost of this item. While the committee understood how this could happen there was some question about the number of hours this involved per week and the rate of pay per hour. The number of hours appeared vague and the rate of pay did not seem obvious. It was decided that the committee would ask Mr. Neil Crawford to come in to the next meeting to answer further questions. And the request was then put on hold.

A request for the Hatchery Road Loan [80750.12] was made for \$988 to fund the FY 12 Loan payment. And error was made in estimating the loan payment for FY 12 and the amount for FY 13 was used by mistake. Mrs. Spaulding 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Zukauskas 2<sup>nd</sup> passed unanimously.

Police Salaries Account [60210.04] requested \$4,500 to cover the cost of an extra day of police work to cover a policy emergency which had to remain confidential. While the committee was anxious to provide the necessary money, the police salaries account still has a balance of \$32,855.12. There is no specific time limit on the need for an extra day of police service, and the committee suggested that this request be made when there was a need for that money in the account. The request was withdrawn and will be presented when there is a real need in that account.



Mr. Nat Yohalem (selectman) then came before the committee to report on his activities so far in establishing the capital needs of the various town departments:-

#### **New Marlborough Volunteer Fire and Rescue**

- 1) Replace attack engine # 1 which is currently 20 years old; suggest taking a 20 year loan for \$600,000 to replace this engine. {It is thought that Great Barrington was able to do this!}
- 2) Rent the Police Department a space in the new Emergency Services building at approximately \$12,000 per year.

#### **Highway Department**

- 1) Budget year 2013, International 7500 SFA 4X4 Dump truck, plow and sander. This replaces the 4900 dump truck which is 1998-\$195,000. Also a new or used 20-ton trailer for \$25,000. (10 year life expectancy).
- 2) Budget Year 2014, new or used (low hours) CAT 312 Excavator or equal \$100,000=\$140,000 (10 year life expectancy).
- 3) Budget year 2015, replace 7300 Dump Truck (2003) 4190,000 also replace F 350 Pickup (2009) \$30,000 (7 year life expectancy).
- 4) Budget year 2016, replace Grader with a new or low hours used Grader, \$250,000 (15 year life expectancy)
- 5) Budget year 2017, replace Loader \$200,000 (15 year life expectancy).

#### **Ambulance**

- 1) A new ambulance is expected to cost about \$150,000 and last about 6 years.
- 2) 3 Defibrillators cost about \$9,000 and have a life expectancy of 5 years.
- 3) A power cot cost \$10,000 and has a 10 year life expectancy.
- 4) The current (new ambulance) has a loan costing about \$30,000 per year (between 4 and 6 years).

It was noted that loans for the highway vehicles would expire (\$20,000 this year), (\$20,000) next year and the Garage will be paid off in 2014!

Mr. Yohalem expects to have the capital needs for the Police Department in hand at the next Finance committee meeting.

Mr. Yohalem then informed the committee that the quarterly tax bills will not incur any additional expenses, except the additional cost of postage. He added that the Tax Collector will provide him with additional information in the near future.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM with the next meeting to take place at 7:00PM at the Town Hall.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Prudence Spaulding  
Secretary*